

## 研究論文

### “How Do Teachers Face the Issue on Cyber-Bullying?” - Focusing on Academic Hierarchy in High Schools -

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In recent years, the movement that encourages "independent study" in higher education has become popular. Opportunities for discussions on how to lead college students to the world of "learning" and to develop them into "active agents that are perpetually learning" are increasing as the big objective of higher learning. Attempts made by the Central Council for Education to give their findings and the Education Rebuilding Council to introduce active learning or flipped classroom into college curriculum to stimulate "independent learning of students" are still fresh in our minds.

However, there still remains some skepticism in forcing "independent learning" upon all college students. In this paper, while discussing the academic abilities of high school students and subjects surrounding student counseling issues, I would like to explore the type of learning support that aims for academic competency found in the 21st century.

Jumping to conclusion, learning support for college students necessitates support that is dependent on their situation. In particular, I believe the building of social capital that connects big groups through the "bridge type" to hold an important position in higher education as one of the competencies that a younger person of today needs to acquire.

#### 0. The shift in curriculum guidelines and viewpoint of academic competency

The new curriculum guideline for high school has been applied in progression to incoming students starting from 2014 with the "reversal" of *Yutori* education serving as its core. Putting aside the expanded content of instructional subjects for the time being, the new curriculum is characterized by "common requirements" for disciplines serving as major subjects such as Japanese, math, and foreign language. In addition, the allowance to conduct more than 30 hours of class time per week has been clarified in the new decree. It is easy to discern from this backdrop that reform movement to improve academic competency even in high school education setting is being put forward.

Until now, the curriculum guideline vacillated like a pendulum swinging between the "systematic method," a school of thought propagating the fixation of knowledge in phases, and the "experiential method," a pedagogical system premised on the children's interests. Subsequently, the curriculum guideline had been compiled almost every ten years with keywords such as *tsumekomi* (cramming) or *yutori* (ease of learning) popping up depending on the period.

#### 1. How did the theory on academic ability change?

At the heart of transition of the curriculum guideline, there were discussions on a range of educational policies that were based on diverse values. For example, to

begin with, an academic definition was called for regarding what was meant by "academic ability." Similarly, inquiries were made about the actual "ability" that urgently needed to be acquired by students in response to the various issues occurring at schools.

Disputes existed over the definition of academic abilities immediately after the War, and according to Koji Tanaka, they can be divided into five periods <sup>(note 1)</sup>. Namely, the disputes in concern were, 1. The criticism of Crawling Around Experiential Theory in the form of Basic Academic Ability Theory; 2. Disputes regarding "measurable academic ability" over Principle Theory; 3. Disputes over "academic ability and character;" 4. Disputes over the viewpoint of the "new academic ability;" and lastly, 5. The dispute over the "decrease in academic ability." Given the limited space, I will provide just an overview on the main points. From the above, we can understand that the controversy over the shared characteristic from periods 1 and 2 to be whether to perceive the new academic abilities such as "learning attitude" and "application towards daily life" as a part of the range of "academic abilities" in addition to the abilities to "read, write and perform abacus" that have been incorporated since the Edo period. Especially, the academic ability model that is cognizant of the social capital, which has been espoused by one of the key theorists of the 2nd period, Shuichi Katsuta, had already been debated in the 1960s as it is similarly pointed out as one of the key competency areas as well as the basic abilities of a professional of today.

The shared argument in periods 3 and 4 was on how to measure the academic ability that is "immeasurable," which met the criteria of the broad-based definition of academic ability. Specifically, period 3 argued that the "character" of a person played a substantial role in determining the abilities of a person. To that line of belief, period 4 proposed on how to utilize thinking ability, judgment and self-expression instead of focusing on the embeddedness of those qualities. It actually argued for the growth of immeasurable academic abilities by recognizing the outlook toward learning such as interest, enthusiasm, and attitude as a big part of "academic ability."

Table1. Results of PISA(Readings)

2003		2006		2009		2012	
1 Finland	543	1 Korea	556	1 Shanghai	556	1 Shanghai	570
2 Korea	534	2 Finland	547	2 Korea	539	2 HongKong	545
3 Canada	528	3 HongKong	536	3 Finland	536	3 singapore	542
4 Australia	525	4 Canada	527	4 HongKong	533	4 Japan	538
5 Liechtenstein	525	5 New Zealand	521	5 singapore	526	5 Korea	536
6 New Zealand	522	6 Ireland	517	6 Canada	524	6 Finland	524
7 Ireland	515	7 Australia	513	7 New Zealand	521	7 Ireland	523
8 Sweden	513	8 Liechtenstein	510	8 Japan	520	7 Taiwan	523
9 Netherland	513	9 Poland	508	9 Australia	515	7 Canada	523
10 HongKong	510	10 Sweden	507	10 Netherland	508	10 Poland	518
14 Japan	498	15 Japan	498				

(Reference)MEXT "International survey on academic performance"  
[http://www.mext.go.jp/a\\_menu/shotou/gakuryoku-chousa/sonota/07032813.htm](http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/gakuryoku-chousa/sonota/07032813.htm) 2014.7.15  
 access)

Finally, the decline in academic abilities that have been demonstrated in period 5 is the result of Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) by the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) that was conducted in 2003.(Table1)

The "PISA Shock," which spelled the fall of Japanese kids from the world's top level in terms of their academic ability centering on their reading comprehension, turned the heat up over the debate on the decline of academic abilities. Consequently, this led to the revision of the curriculum guideline that was mentioned in the beginning.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology-Japan (MEXT) advocated for the "solid academic ability" even under *Yutori* education and indicated a strategy towards a new formation of academic skills. Subsequently, they will deem the sound embeddedness of basic knowledge and skills as "learning;" the development of the ability to learn and think on one's own as "seeking;" and the nurturing of the ability to apply the knowledge and skills in daily life as "utilizing" (note 2). As a result, the school scene witnessed a shift back to the *tsumekomi* education as seen in the increase in classroom time and the prevalence of learning drills. On the other hand, there has been a push toward knowledge acquisition that is more utility based and learning that is more interdisciplinary.

## 2. What is the ability that is required in the coming days?

Since the debate surrounding the decline in academic abilities, similar proposals from various angles that point to the same direction have been made with regard to the "skills" that children need to equip themselves with. For example, MEXT uses the expressions of "the ability to live" and "human skills," and Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) employs the term, "basic professional skill." Furthermore, OECD adopts the phrase "key competency" and in the field of higher education, "generic skill" is used to define the "skill" needed for the coming days. However, to acquire these skills, one needs to learn the knowledge acquisition model first at school. All parties seem to agree that once upon obtaining these qualities, and learning how to utilize them would lead to the acquisition of such "skills" that would enable students to confront complex issues.

However, what is really happening with high school students? From schools all over, there are major concerns over the seemingly weak bond between friendships. The society seeks for bonds and solidarity when it experiences numerous and unprecedented earthquakes. There is absolutely nothing wrong with this philosophical value, and in the educational world itself, they frequently talk about the importance of communication skills and the ability to manage groups. Yet the more emphasis is given to class management that focuses on the "connection" between groups, there is the unfortunate reality that more students would evade being "connected" and instances where students would blame themselves for not being able to "connect."

### 3. The reality of "disconnected" high school students

In recent years, guidance-counseling issues surrounding high school students are becoming more complex. For example, cellular phone ownership ratio of 89.7% (smartphone: 60.9%, featured phone: 28.8%) (Table 2) among high school students has led to excessive dependency on the Internet, resulting in the weakening of the real value of communication <sup>(note 3)</sup>.

Table 2. The ratio of cellular phone ownership in high school students

smartphone	featured phone	total
60.9%	28.8%	89.7%
(n=1,330)	(n=628)	(n=1,958)

(Reference)Kiyoharu Hara, Kenshi Yamananouchi, Hitomi Asada "An Empirical study of factor and the reality on Cyber bullying" (Draft on The 74<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of Japanese Educational Research Association at 2013.8.29)

The social norms on cyberspace are fragile even for high school students, and human rights violations such as "Net bullying" can easily occur. Furthermore, there has been a slight reduction in the truancy and dropout rates among high school students(Figure 2). Accordingly, the various guidance-counseling issues are not occurring by themselves, but rather they overlap and arise out of mutual repetition. More than before, the problematic behaviors seem to differ in their characteristics in accordance with the academic hierarchy that each high school is ranked in.

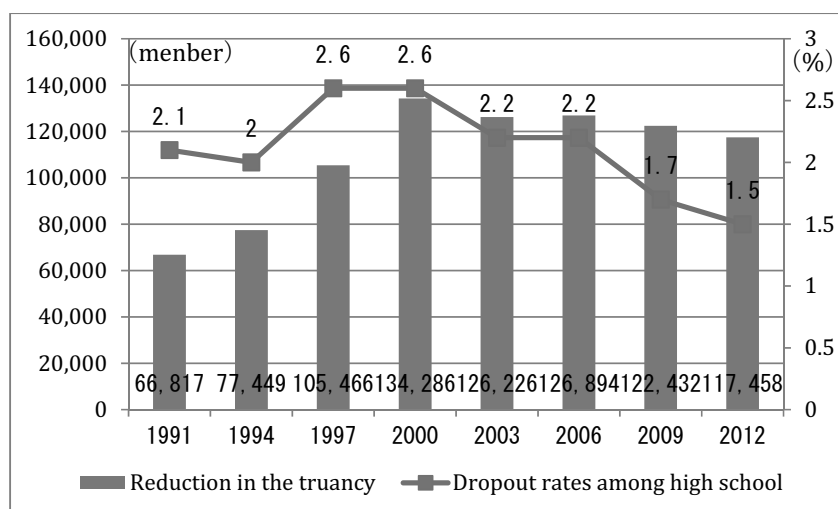


Figure 2. The ratio of reduction in the truancy and dropout rates among high school

(Reference)MEXT" Investigation about the miscellaneous problems by which school children's problem behavior is on the student guidance in fiscal year 2012" ([http://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/houdou/25/12/\\_icsFiles/afieldfile/2013/12/17/1341728\\_02\\_1.pdf](http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houdou/25/12/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2013/12/17/1341728_02_1.pdf) 2014.5.28 access)

Let me give you a specific example. For instance, the magnitude of the bullying incident involving a middle school student of Ohtsu City in 2011 and its media coverage not only elevated the public interest for this matter, but it also progressed into a debate concerning the way of being of the board of education and the unforgiving public opinion regarding the school staff members. At the same time, rather than the eradication of bullying from the children's world, which is the main theme, there has been a painful chain of suicides one after another owing to bullying in comparison to the size of the problem. In this way, that fact that "bullying has been detected among groups that maintain regular interpersonal relationships" has been attributed to one of the reasons as to why bullying has become hard to detect in recent days. Unlike the old days, where bullying took the form of targeting the individual who was not able to belong to any group to isolate him or her has seen a decline. On the contrary, there has been an increase in cases where a regular member in the group would become the object of "teasing," and the bullying behavior would become embedded as an extension of "pastime" or "prank" at times. Those individuals who become the recipients of such behaviors are the so-called "clowns." Those individuals may actually dislike being the "clown." However, from their desire to belong to the group, they may rationalize this by saying that "this is not serious," and mask their real feelings behind laughter as if they are enjoying themselves. Consequently, those on the bullying side would start to lose the awareness that they are engaged in such behaviors and will witness the fading of their conscience. In the world of closed relationships such as that of an inside of a group, "bullying" disguised as "teasing" will endlessly carry on without any awareness, leading to an escalation.

As one of the characteristics of the individuals being bullied in schools (for the time being we would call this "real bullying" to differentiate from "Net bullying"), Akira Moriguchi (2007) points to their all-too-often lower ranking in the "school caste" system that demonstrates a person's status within the classroom <sup>(note 4)</sup>. One of the factors that determine one's position in the caste structure among high school students depends on the individual's uniqueness or the strength of the person's communication ability. Rather than using the easily-visible grade point average, athletic competency, or looks as the judgment criteria for one's place in the caste system, it seems to be the person's degree of *kooki yomenai* factor, otherwise known in its popularly abbreviated form of KY, which means to say that a person is unable to read between the lines, that contributes to the lowering of a person's position in the caste system. In particular, the "real bullying" among high school students is said to vary depending on where the group belongs in the caste structure which the individual is a part of.

Such behaviors in the real world would take on similar relevance that is played out in the Internet environment (virtual) surrounding the child which we call "Net bullying." The exchange of "hazing" or "being hazed" is repeated on the Internet through the communication devices such as cell phones and smartphones, and those acts are of course hidden from the outside world. Once becoming the target of Net bullying, the individual will be constantly preoccupied about the cyber space even during non-school hours, and will never feel at ease, as the person will

be living in perpetual fear. From the outside, the victim's tolerance level would seem to have suddenly exceeded the limit, triggering truancy and dropouts.

#### 4. Problem behaviors and its relation with the academic hierarchy of the high school-characteristics of the various issues on guidance counseling-

Taking a section from the Large Scale Study on Net Bullying (number of samples: 1528 people) conducted in 2013 that targeted high schools in the Kinki region, I want to explore the difference between schools of higher academic standing (hereinafter, higher standing schools), otherwise known as high schools with high university admission rates, with schools of diverse paths (hereinafter, diverse schools).

Table3. The rate of Net bullying on the academic hierarchy of high schools

	many times	some-times	rarely	hardly	none
higher standing schools	0.8% (n=11)	2.1% (n=29)	4.6% (n=63)	19.1% (n=262)	73.4% (n=1,008)
diverse schools	1.0% (n=7)	1.5% (n=10)	4.2% (n=29)	17.5% (n=120)	75.8% (n=520)

( $\chi^2 = 2.393$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $p=0.664$ )

There was no significant difference in the incidence rate of Net bullying due to the academic hierarchy of high schools. A fixed number in both the higher standing schools (7.5%) and diverse schools (6.7%) replied, "they have experienced being bullied on the Internet" (Table 3). However, significant differences were found in some items between the higher standing schools and diverse schools with regard to the variables that impact the content.

Table4. Contents of Net bullying (more than one answers)

	Sending evil-mail	Posting a blog	blogging to underground sites	releasing personal information	releasing the images
higher standing schools	3.9% (n=4)	18.4% (n=19)	3.9% (n=4)	15.5% (n=16)	6.8% (n=7)
diverse schools	4.3% (n=2)	28.3% (n=13)	0.0% (n=0)	30.4% (n=14)	4.3% (n=2)

Looking at the findings, Net bullying at higher standing schools seems to be characterized by "exposing" any story of the victim and laughing about it by way of blogging to underground sites (higher standing schools 3.9%: diverse schools 0%), or by releasing the images (ditto 6.8%: 4.3%). In the free-writing column, replies such as "Although names were not mentioned, there were things written that everybody could easily tell it was about me" could be found. On the contrary, diverse schools seemed more inclined to commit human rights violations by directly slandering the victims by posting a blog (upper standing schools 18.4%: diverse schools 28.3%) or by releasing personal information (ditto 15.5%: 30.4%). (Table4)

What we can glean from these Net bullying is the difference in student counseling issues depending on the academic hierarchy of the high school. Even when we only take out the phenomenon of "Net bullying," there are variations in the details and responses between the upper standing schools and diverse schools. That is why it is difficult to find a universal instructional method that could be applied to all. Now to provide a rough analysis, it seems that upper standing schools may have cliques among different groups, but they may not share the strong characteristics of a caste system that is strongly represented through the hierarchical system. Hence, it is difficult to identify the hierarchical relationships inside a group or between groups. Subsequently, there may be no such thing as an ideal condition for problematic behaviors like serious bullying to occur, but rather, there is a need to individually respond to issues that appear to be less threatening such as "hazing" or "exposing." However, in diverse schools, behaviors that condone ranking confirmation such as actual "bullying" appear to take place more often. For example, individuals acutely understand which position they belong to in a group, and from that, they are individually attacked exactly because of their position in the caste system that their group belongs to. For these reasons, one problematic behavior takes place consecutively, which creates ongoing issues. At the same time, these cases are often cleverly designed not to appear like "bullying." Therefore, there is a need for planned and continuous counseling to take place with an implicit understanding of these environmental factors. When you come right down to it, strategies to dissolve the existing caste system that has been formed between groups and individuals are required.

The Internet tools over recent years have transformed interpersonal relationships among children. The conventional face-to-face communication allowed the other to gauge a response from the counterpart's facial expressions. However, communication through PCs or smartphones creates a recipe for misunderstanding. In addition, the younger generation creates neologisms which are filled with ambiguities that can only be conveyed within the group, and how those terms are understood is up to the recipient. By using Internet tools as a conduit, it further creates opportunities for misunderstanding. That is why the closer their friendship, the children of today become more anxious as to how they are perceived, constantly worrying about their reputation. For that reason, even though they are continuously connected through the Internet, there is a weak sense of belonging among group members and they become afraid unless they are connected with multiple groups.

From the findings of Net bullying above, one can sense the complex emotions among high school students with regard to "connection." In the free-writing column, there are many that struggle with peer pressure saying, "If I had not joined the LINE community at every cost, people would think I have no friends." The "lonely seat" found in university cafeterias is a seat with partitions in the middle of a big table that allows for one to take meals without worrying what others think. And there are quite a few who choose to sit there. When we are constantly told the importance of staying "connected," the result may be hazing or bullying, or worse, people may start to think, "it is bad to be alone." The fact that there are many high school students who are afraid of what others think and who would go to extreme



measures not to be alone may be going against the idea of "skills" that is required by today's day and age.

## 5. The importance of social capital

Once again, I would like to think about the reason why the society seeks for the power to "connect." In education, "social capital" is sometimes used in place of this type of "connection." There are two sides to social capital. One is the positive aspect of building trust and networking, and the other is the negative side of being constrained by others. However, it is defined as a network that is equipped with standard, values and understanding that promotes cooperation within the group or among groups <sup>(note 5)</sup>. There are many studies saying that social capital can be a factor in boosting academic abilities. In particular, Koukichi Shimizu says that children who were brought up in the region, school or household where diverse interpersonal relationships existed, they are guaranteed to have a certain amount of academic ability even if they come from an economically or culturally challenging household <sup>(note 6)</sup>. By employing the theory of "effective schools" as his basis, Mr. Shimizu discusses the impact on academic abilities by exploring how human relationships are built within the classroom and how that affects the student in question.

Collaborative learning (learning model with an emphasis on group work and presentations) which is being vigorously practiced in school scenes recently, is a strategy to strengthen the connection between groups. Furthermore, in the measurement of educational effectiveness, a lot is drawn from the practice of collaborative learning to find the results.

## 6. What is the power to "connect" that is necessary for children and the youth?

Lastly, I want to explore the meaning behind the power to "connect" that will be demanded from children and the youth in the coming future.

We can understand that incorporating collaborative learning in groups, as it has been clearly demonstrated from the results of PISA2012, is starting to take educational effects. We can say that this is the result of being able to think in a multifaceted way as we realize that we are not able to arrive at certain conclusions entirely on our own and learn how to use other's opinions as a reference point. Furthermore, and maybe this is a secondary effect from such learning methods, but the number of high school and college students that are able to take the initiative to manage groups and take action seem to be gradually increasing.

However, I get the impression that that is a limited "connection" within a fixed framework called the same group, same grade level, and same school. Among the studies of social capital, Putnam (R. Putnam, translated 2006) points to the difference between the "bonding" type capital that increases the cohesiveness of the group, and the "bridging" type capital that connects varying groups <sup>(note 7)</sup>. The former reinforces the exclusive identity and the homogeneity of the group, and though it is inward looking, it is known to increase reciprocity and solidarity in the group. As opposed to that, the latter is adept at managing different external groups



and information sharing over a wide range of scope, leading to identity formation of a larger entity. It seems that the type of power to "connect" that are being demanded from high school students can be largely found in the "bridging" type.

Looking at high school and college students lately, their group seems to be comprised of 2 to 4 people, and what is more is that the group is characterized by its homogeneity. Shinji Miyadai named this phenomenon the "island cosmos" (note 8). What is shocking is that there is a tremendous amount of mutual disinterest in between the islands floating in space. However, when we shift our eyes to what is happening on the islands, the interpersonal relationship is very strong, and members are required to stay "connected" whether in the real world or on the Internet. In that sense, high school students are solidly equipped with the "bonding" type of social capital.

At the same time, how many young people are out there that are able to shift their attention to different islands, not to mention connecting the islands? Unfortunately, there are not many high school or college students who are able to say, "come to our group" with compassion towards those students who are being bullied or those who stand in the corner of the classroom because they are unable to have smooth interpersonal relationships.

While our emphasis seems to be on providing career education, there are "skills" that are demanded when we shift from being a student to become a professional. At the same time, there are measurable academic skills that serve as the basic knowledge which we saw in the previous section of this chapter. On the other hand, there are skills that cannot be measured such as the ability to build human relationships which is demonstrated by social capital. When they are both combined, its power multiplies. In the world of labor force, we are confronted with the existence of many others that have very different values from our own. However, if we are able to "connect" only within the "island cosmos," then there must have been a problem with the skill sets that we acquired before transitioning to the world of labor.

We can lose sight of certain things when we keep discussing academic skills beyond a certain point. What that is, is the reciprocal nature of human relationships. If I borrow the findings of Kiyokazu Maebayashi (2009), in order to achieve a win-win human relationship, the secret would be to "return" the favor in some form if someone did a favor on to you (note 9). Understanding the meaning of this seemingly commonsensical notion may be the "skills" that are demanded during the phase before transitioning to the world of work. Then the question would be how to nurture our sense of compassion for others? It is easy to say, but this must be an aporia for the high school students of today.

[Addendum]

This chapter, which combines *Shift in Academic Abilities and "Skills" Sought in High School Students* (Monthly High School Education May issue, 2015, Gakuji Shuppan, pp.26-30) and *The Characteristics of Complex Student Counseling Issues-Using the Reality of Net Bullying as a Clue* (Monthly High School Education, August issue, 2014) that are authored by Kiyoharu Hara, has been heavily edited. It is also a

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[Note]

(note1) Koji Tanaka, *Educational Evaluation*, Iwanami Bookstore, 2008, pp.95-120

(note2) Hideaki Ishii, Current as of the scholastic aptitude discussion, Kayo Matsushita, *Does< the new ability> change education?*, Minerva Bookstore, 2010, p.141

(note3) Kiyoharu Hara, Why can't a bullying problem be settled? , *Child Study*, vol.67, no.12, Kaneko Bookstore, 2013, pp.13-21

(note4) Akira Moriguchi, *The structure of the bullying*, shinchosha, 2007, pp.10-15

(note5) Yoji Inaba, *Guide of social capital*, Chuokoron-shinsha, 2011, p.24

(note6) Kokichi Shimizu, The social related capital and the scholastic achievement, ([http://www.mext.go.jp/component/a\\_menu/education/micro\\_detail/\\_icsFiles/afieldfile/2014/02/17/1344295\\_014.pdf](http://www.mext.go.jp/component/a_menu/education/micro_detail/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2014/02/17/1344295_014.pdf) 2015.3.10 access) pp.19-20

(note7) Robert D.Putnam ,*Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Simon & Schuster, 2001

(note8) Shinji Miyadai, *The choice of Uniform girls*, Kodansha, 1994, pp.246-247

(note9) Kiyokazu Maebayashi, *Aiming at society of Win-Win*, Koyoshobo, 2009